

- ☑ Coast Guard's war on terror (back)
- ☑ Visit the Club on pool tournament night, 6 p.m. next Tuesday.
- ☑ Brig. Gen. Pershing's 1916 punitive expedition against Pancho Villa included eight Curtis JN-2s, none of which survived the punishment of flying at 10,000 feet over the mountains of northern Mexico.

Good to be home again!

Six Iraqi Freedom veterans of the 439th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron were reunited with their families last Wednesday night at the squadron building after driving here from Dover AFB, Del. Clockwise from top, five-year-old Johnny Galvany wields a bundle of American flags while waiting in the rain for his dad; Capt. John Galvany holds daughter, Olivia, while walking with wife, Penny, and son, Johnny, to the AES building; and Maj. Michael Stankus arrives at the building. Galvany and Stankus served aboard the USS Comfort in the AOR. Others who returned were: Capt. Calvin Mellor and Capt. Mark Bialas, who served in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq; and Capt. Cheryl Duzant and Capt. Edwin Moralez, who served in southern Iraq. The medical service corps officers and aeromedical evacuation flight nurses deployed in separate teams during March.

--photos by
MSgt. Tom Allocco



Civil Engineers leave their mark around world

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

From Elmendorf, AFB, Alaska to Lakenheath AB, England, from Westover to Honduras you can see the handiwork of the carpenters, masons, heavy equipment operators, electricians, heating and air conditioning, sheet metal and other skills of the 439th Civil Engineer Squadron.

The civil engineers are made up of about 75 Prime BEEF specialists in the building trades who can go anywhere and do anything from the bottom up, pouring cement to nailing down a roof. They have proven that in most places of the world. In Honduras there are children going to classes today in a school built by the Patriot Wing civil engineers. At Dobbins ARB, Ga. reservists are training at facilities remodeled by the civil engineers.

The civil engineers have a tough job, but they have the good fortune of knowing that they are doing something with lasting value. When they finish a job, they will be leave a permanent, positive impact wherever they have been. "When you return and see what you did, it gives you a good feeling. You see something that is staying years and you can say there you did something, you accomplished something," said TSgt. Francis Robles, a 439th CES a heavy equipment operator.

Robles has been a civil engineer here for a dozen years, coming to Westover after 11 years at Barnes ANGB. He has helped remodel facilities at Lakenheath AB, England; Rhein-Main AB, Germany and Dobbins ARB, Ga. Robles is a teacher in Holyoke. When the civil engineers sent teams to Honduras to build a school, he collected books, school

supplies and clothes. The Patriot Wing members earned additional gratitude when they distributed the gifts to the people in the Honduran town.

In recent weeks, civil engineers have been going to New Mexico to build homes for impoverished Navahos. Three teams of about 20 civil engineers are cycling through the project for two weeks each.

SMSgt. Michael Herens, CE structural superintendent who is employed as a cabinet maker, recently returned from two weeks in New Mexico. His team flew to Albuquerque and then drove west for two and a half hours to the Navaho reservation near Gallup.

The project has been underway for about five years in a cooperative effort between the Southwest Indian Foundation

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439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

CES...(From page 1)

and the Air Force Academy. The two-piece modular houses are built in a warehouse, trucked to the site and set up for the families.

In 30 years as a civil engineer, including tours in Italy, Spain and Alaska, Herens described the work with the Navaho as the most satisfying job he ever did.

"That was the best. You could really see the need for the finished product. The conditions they live in at the reservation... a lot of poverty... they still heat with coal stoves. When you drive around you see huts, shacks. I've a better shed in my back yard than you see people living in," Herens said.

Building schools in Honduras and homes in New Mexico not only helps other people, but brings the civil engineer squadron together as a unit with unique esprit de corps. "There is camaraderie. You want to get out there and do something and see what you have done. You know you had a good two weeks when you see it is utilized years down the road," said TSgt. Allen Guiel, a heavy equipment operator.



MSgt. Jim Sierra, SMSgt. Dawn Schile and SMSgt. Mike Herens exemplify team work as they work on a recent base project.
— photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

"You learn something here and it has an impact as a civilian. And you learn something as a civilian and you bring it here and it has an impact," Guiel said.

Civil engineering is not easy work. At the former Howard AB, Guiel, Robles and the other civil engineers poured cement and laid pipe in tropical heat. They also had to dig trenches by hand inside a building in which they couldn't get machinery. "You have to be in a little bit of good shape. But it gets done," Guiel said.

"Sometimes there isn't enough work or you have to wait because you're not getting the materials to get the job done. That's the worst part, because you want to do something," he said.

"People work together, help each other," Guiel said. Off the job, the civil engineers also stick together. Typical of how they think of themselves as a family, they regularly get together for cook-outs that bring together current and former squadron members.

"It is hard work. You work under different conditions, in the cold and heat. But we really like it... we enjoy what we are doing," Robles said.

Guiei is employed in the public works department of Meriden, Conn. He and Robles recently completed training to earn certification as crane operators at a civilian school in Orlando, Fla. It's an example of how reservists and employers benefit each other. When they go to work in uniform or at their civilian jobs, they bring a huge amount of experience to the table.

Coast Guard reservists patrol in Iraqi Freedom

The Coast Guard Reserve has been in the war on terrorism since the first hours of 9/11, when some security specialists were activated. Some of them recently returned home through the Westover Passenger Terminal.

The Coast Guard reservists contributed to Iraqi Freedom serving aboard armed gunboats at an Iraqi port and in a security details at an oil platform in the Persian Gulf.

The group received a Westover Welcome on their way home to San Pedro, Calif. Among them was petty officer PS1 Ernie Gomez, who stood guard on an oil platform in the Persian Gulf for 36 days.

Gomez was part of a 41-member detachment which guarded the oil platform under primitive conditions. Twisted metal from bomb damage of the oil platform was still untouched since fighting between Iran and Iraq. The platform was slick with oil and for the first 13 days the Coast Guard detachment lived amid slicks without taking a shower or changing their uniforms. They washed with bottled water and baby wipes before showering aboard a patrolling ship. For almost four weeks there was no mail and they ate only MREs. It was a treat when British sailors passed them some apples.

Two major storms hit the oil platform, threatening to sweep them off. "It was 50 mph wind, 14-foot seas were coming underneath the platform. It was relentless, the worst that I've been scared in my career. We slept in life jackets," Gomez said.

Other Coast Guard reservists in the group served aboard 25-foot security boats armed with M-60s and .50 caliber guns at an Iraqi port.

Gomez was first activated a few hours after the 9/11 terror attacks. He and other Coast Guard reservists provided security at the Los Angeles port.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003

7,856 passengers -- 2,598 aircraft
29,533,647 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

15,725 hot meals served
Box lunches: 5,036
Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb.1
17,401,384 gallons of JP-8
Info from Jim Maloney, Fuels

PATRIOT express

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using deploying reservist's last names)

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Express-ions

